

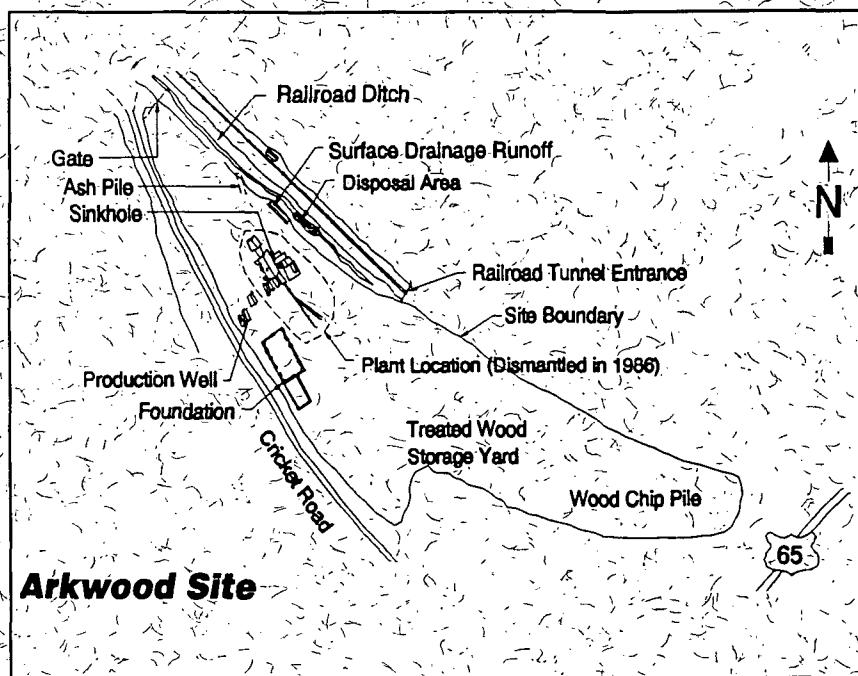


# SUPERFUND SITE UPDATE

Arkwood, Inc., Superfund Site

Omaha, Arkansas

February 7, 1991



## Arkwood Site

### THIS FACT SHEET WILL TELL YOU ABOUT . . .

- The Consent Decree for remedial activities
- The completed ground-water dye tracing investigation
- Answers to community questions
- EPA's plans for a satellite office in Omaha
- EPA's new remedial project manager

## EPA AND MMI SIGN A CONSENT DECREE

On September 28, 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection (EPA) signed a Record of Decision (ROD) selecting a remedy for the Arkwood, Inc., Superfund (Arkwood) site. After signing the ROD, EPA entered into negotiations with Mass Merchandisers, Inc. (MMI). In the negotiations, MMI's intent to conduct remedial activities was discussed. Negotiations ended on April 8, 1991, when MMI signed a Remedial Design and Remedial Action (RD/RA) Consent Decree. The Consent Decree is a legal document that formalizes the agreement reached by EPA and MMI and describes the specific activities that MMI will conduct. The U.S. Department of Justice has lodged the Consent Decree in Federal District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Harrison Division, in Fayetteville, Arkansas. A notice has been published in the Federal Register that establishes a 30 day public comment period for the Arkwood Consent Decree, which will run until March 5, 1992. Citizens are urged to review the documents and address their written comments to:

Assistant Attorney General  
Land and Natural Resources Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
10th and Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

All comments should refer to: **The United States v. Mass Merchandisers, Inc., D.J. Ref. 90-11-2-190a.** At the end of the comment period, the Court will consider all written comments before the Consent Decree takes effect.

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Certified copies of the Consent Decree are available for public review at the following locations:

Federal District Court  
Western District of Arkansas  
Harrison Division  
Federal Building, U.S. Courthouse  
35 East Mountain, Room 523  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701  
(501) 521-6980  
8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Omaha Public School Library  
Omaha, Arkansas 72662  
(501) 426-3366  
7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

By signing the Consent Decree, MMI agreed to plan, pay for, and carry out the remedy selected for the site as described in the ROD. The remedy includes treating contaminated soils with a sieve-and-wash process and then incinerating any soils that do not meet health-based goals. The sieve-and-wash process will serve to minimize the amount of materials requiring incineration. Because of the concern voiced by the community regarding incineration, every effort will be made to minimize the amount of incineration necessary.

The remedy also includes monitoring and, if necessary, treating contaminated ground water. The specific activities to be performed under the Consent Decree are listed below.

Before any work is conducted, MMI will submit work plans, anticipated schedules for work completion, and various other documents (such as a health and safety plan and quality assurance plan) to EPA for approval. EPA will review all plans submitted by MMI, and only after EPA approves the plans will MMI be allowed to perform the work.

To ensure that all work is conducted according to the Consent Decree and federal guidelines, EPA will closely monitor MMI's work. MMI will be required to submit monthly reports to EPA detailing the status of site activities and short-term projections for future site activities.

### Activities Outlined in the Consent Decree

1. Installing a 6-foot chain-link fence around the site
2. Excavating and removing contaminated soils, sludges, pumpable liquids, and oils
3. Treating contaminated soils with a sieve-and-wash process
4. Incinerating soils remaining after the sieve-and-wash process, along with sludges, liquids, and oils that do not meet health-based goals.
5. Treating contaminated wastewater from the sieve-and-wash process; treating the water used in the incineration process; treating any contaminated stormwater; and treating the water used to decontaminate the equipment
6. Backfilling the sinkhole, railroad ditch, and other excavated areas with clean fill, including treated soils and incinerator ash that meets health-based goals
7. Placing a 6-inch topsoil cap over the entire site and planting native grasses over the entire area
8. Constructing an extension to the Omaha municipal water line to provide city water to designated residences
9. Monitoring springs and ground water from six wells for 30 years
10. Monitoring and treating additional springs, if necessary, as identified through the dye tracing study results
11. Treating New Cricket Spring water if state water quality standards are not met consistently 2 years after soils remediation

## EPA ANSWERS QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE COMMUNITY

**QUESTION:** *Are incinerators safe? What is the likelihood of the incinerator malfunctioning?*

**ANSWER:** Well-designed and operated incinerators are safe. The risks to human health and the environment from present site contamination far exceeds any risk from an incinerator at the site. The incinerator must go through a trial burn to demonstrate that it can meet strict standards. These standards must also be met at all times during the actual on-site incineration. A health and safety plan is being developed under terms of the Consent Decree to ensure safe operation of the incinerator. In addition, the incinerator's performance will be continually monitored, and the slightest variance from normal operations (though very unlikely) will be investigated and corrected.

**QUESTION:** *Does the site really pose a health hazard?*

**ANSWER:** Yes. The endangerment assessment, a study that was conducted to determine short- and long-term risks to public health and the environment, determined that the increased cancer risks from the Arkwood site contamination exceed the acceptable risk range established in the National Contingency Plan (NCP). The NCP is the federal regulation that sets the framework for the Superfund program.

**QUESTION:** *During incineration, could contaminants be emitted into the air and harm Omaha public school teachers and students?*

**ANSWER:** A well designed and properly operated incinerator will not cause health or environmental problems. Based on the best available information concerning the risks of incineration, EPA has developed standards that place strict limits on incinerator emissions. The temporary incinerator will be equipped with air pollution control devices that will be monitored to ensure that the standards to protect students, teachers, local residents, and the environment are met. In addition, air monitors will be installed around the site and near the school to monitor air quality during the incineration project.

**QUESTION:** *Will the incinerator be permanent, and will wastes be brought from other locations to be treated at the Arkwood site?*

**ANSWER:** No. A mobile incinerator will be brought to the site and will remain until the remedy is completed. The incinerator will only be used to burn soil and waste from the Arkwood site. Federal regulations do not allow wastes from one Superfund site to be brought to another site for treatment unless the sites are near each other and the wastes are similar. No other Superfund site is located near the Arkwood site. At the end of remedial activities, the temporary incinerator will be dismantled and removed from the site.

**QUESTION:** *Isn't there a less expensive remedy for contamination at the site?*

**ANSWER:** EPA considered several alternatives for addressing contamination at the site, including consolidating contaminated materials and capping them on site. However, these alternatives, unlike the selected remedy, are not permanent, do not treat contaminants to the maximum extent practical, and would leave high concentrations of dangerous compounds that would pose a threat to ground water. Because of the degree of contaminant destruction achieved, incineration is the most cost-effective alternative in the long term when compared to the other alternatives considered.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Additional information on the Arkwood site and the Superfund process is available for review at the EPA office in Dallas and at the information repositories listed below.

Omaha Public School Library\*  
Omaha, Arkansas 72662  
(501) 426-3366  
7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., M-Th

Boone County Library  
221 West Stephenson Avenue  
Harrison, Arkansas 72601  
(501) 741-5913  
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., M, W, F, S; 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Th

Boone County Court House  
County Clerk's Office  
101 North Main  
Harrison, Arkansas 72601  
(501) 741-8428  
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m., M-F

Arkansas Dept. of Pollution Control and Ecology\*  
8001 National  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72219-8913  
(501) 562-7444  
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., M-F

\* The Administrative Record is available for review at these locations and at the EPA office in Dallas.

## **NEW REMEDIAL PROJECT MANAGER**

Rick Ehrhart is the new remedial project manager at the Arkwood site. He is a geologist and has considerable project management experience. If you have questions or concerns about anything related to the Arkwood site, please contact Rick Ehrhart or EPA's Community Relations Coordinator, Verne McFarland, at:

Rick Ehrhart  
Remedial Project Manager  
U.S. EPA (6H-EA)  
1445 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733  
(214) 655-6582

Verne McFarland  
Community Relations Coordinator  
U.S. EPA (6H-MC)  
1445 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733  
(214) 655-2240

*Or call EPA's toll-free number: 1-800-533-3508*

Media questions should be directed to Roger Meacham or Dave Bary, Region 6 Press Officers, at (214) 655-2200.

## **GROUND-WATER DYE TRACING INVESTIGATION COMPLETED**

A ground-water dye tracing investigation has been completed at the Arkwood site. The investigation was developed in July 1990 as part of the Phase II Remedial Investigation work plan. The purpose of the investigation was to help determine the direction of ground-water flow at and around the site. Information on ground-water flow will help in determining the potential for local drinking water wells to become contaminated. Two separate dye traces were run during the investigation. The first dye trace began on February 21, 1991, at a small stream at the southeast end of the site. The second trace began on March 14, 1991, near the northwest end of the site at a spring branch approximately 25 feet downstream of New Cricket Spring. Sampling activities for both traces were concluded on April 23, 1991. Investigation results are currently being reviewed and will be made available to the public by early 1992. As specified in the ROD, the results of the investigation could change the number or location of ground-water monitoring well stations used during the RD/RA.

## **SITE BACKGROUND**

The 15-acre Arkwood site is located in an excavated area about 1,000 feet west of U.S. Highway 65, north of Cricket Road. The site consisted of a millwork shop, a wood-treating plant that used creosote and pentachlorophenol (PCP) in its process, and a yard for storing treated wood products prior to sale.

The plant site was developed in the 1950s when a railroad company excavated about 40 to 50 feet below natural grade to obtain fill dirt for constructing a railroad embankment.

Arkwood, Inc., began wood-treating operations at the site in the early 1960s. In 1973, the site owner leased the wood-treating facility to MMI. The facility continued to operate until June 1984, at which time MMI sold or removed its inventory and process materials. In January 1985, MMI's lease expired and was not renewed. The owner dismantled the plant in 1986.

During its 20-plus years of operation, the plant generated an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 pounds of waste per year. Wastes from plant operations were reportedly dumped into a sinkhole at the treatment plant from the beginning of operations until 1970. The sinkhole has since been sealed. In addition, waste oils were placed in a ditch adjacent to the

railroad until approximately 1974, when MMI began using a chemical recovery system. Other wastes included liquids used to wash the treatment plant floor and equipment. These waste liquids were accumulated in a tank and then spread over the wood storage yard to control dust.

The Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology initially received a complaint about the site in 1981. Preliminary investigations revealed detectable levels of PCP in area ground water. In 1985, EPA proposed that the site be added to the National Priorities List; the site was formally added in March 1989.

With EPA oversight, MMI conducted a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) of the site to determine the nature and extent of the contamination and to investigate possible remedies for the site. The RI was conducted in two phases and consisted of (1) a subsurface investigation to characterize the geology beneath the site area and (2) an extensive sampling program to determine the effects of past wood-treating operations on the site and surrounding areas. Samples were collected of area ground water, soil, sediment, air, and surface water. Ground-water samples from monitoring wells at the site contained PCP, with the highest concentrations near the railroad ditch. Samples from area springs showed that only New Cricket Spring has been affected by the site. Soil samples indicated contamination from PCP, chlorinated dibenzodioxins/dibenzofurans, and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons. Sampling also identified sludges in the railroad ditch and possibly in the sinkhole adjacent to the treatment area. Samples of nearby domestic and municipal wells showed no evidence of contamination.

## **OMAHA RESIDENTS EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT EPA'S SELECTED REMEDY**

Many Omaha residents have expressed concerns about EPA's selected remedy for the Arkwood site. In response to a petition against the selected remedy that was signed by Omaha residents, an EPA contractor spent several days in October and November of 1990 interviewing about 100 residents who signed the petition. The purpose of the interviews was to identify and address residents' specific concerns about the selected remedy. The results of the interviews showed that most residents were primarily concerned about the effects that incineration at the site would have on the Omaha community and whether the

incinerator would be permanent. In addition, many residents did not fully understand the incineration process. To address these concerns, EPA held a community open house in February 1991 at the Omaha public school.

During both the interviews and the open house, EPA identified a number of commonly expressed concerns. These concerns are addressed on the enclosed insert.

## EPA TO OPEN A SATELLITE OFFICE IN OMAHA TO RESPOND TO RESIDENTS' CONCERN

Public involvement and education are important, integral parts of the Superfund program. In an effort to make sure that local residents have the information they need to stay

abreast of Arkwood site activities, EPA is making arrangements to open a local office in Omaha. The office will be staffed with a community contact who will serve as an office manager and as a liaison between EPA and the community. This individual will be available to talk to residents face-to-face about the Arkwood site. The goal of opening this office is to provide a means for the community to communicate with EPA and to receive accurate, first-hand information. Copies of site fact sheets and other site-related information will be available at the office for residents to look at and, in some cases, take home to read.

EPA will mail out notices to announce the opening day of the community office. In addition, an open house will be held on opening day so that you may meet the office manager and discuss site status, progress with the remedial design, and the Consent Decree with EPA representatives.

FROM:



U.S. EPA Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue (6H-MC)  
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

TO:

**INSIDE: Consent Decree Lodged for the  
Arkwood, Inc., Superfund Site**



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